



For Immediate Release
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FACT SHEET

MAYOR FOCUSES ATTENTION ON CITY'S UNSOLVED GANG CRIMES TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Mayor calls on the public to help solve gang-related crimes to clean up areas of known gang activity; City's newly formed Gang Commission to address long-range strategies for keeping kids out of gangs

As part of a two-pronged approach to address gang violence in our City, Mayor Sanders yesterday announced and introduced the 17 candidates for the City's first Gang Commission on Prevention and Intervention. While the Commission's focus will be prevention, police know another important tool for fighting gang violence is the public. Police say even seemingly insignificant observations help solve crimes.

"San Diegans desire to live in safe communities. And our children deserve to go to school, play in parks, and enjoy our recreation centers free from the fear that gang presence brings to our neighborhoods."

-- Mayor Jerry Sanders

GANG UNIT MAKEUP

- There are 10 teams assigned to the Gang Unit.
- Six investigative teams are assigned to a specific gang type
 - Asian: 1 team
 - Latino: 2 teams
 - African-American: 2 teams
 - Violent Crime Task Force: 1 team
- There are four pro-active teams in the Gang Unit:
 - Gang suppression: 3 teams
 - Uniformed officers
 - Working seven days a week
 - Each team has a Sergeant
 - Teams work as a group; not individual squads or officers
 - Graffiti strike force: 1 team
 - A mix of uniformed officers and detectives
 - Each officer is assigned a specific division

GANG UNIT STATISTICS

- 232 felony cases have been handled by the Gang Unit from January 1 through September 30, 2006.
- The Gang Unit is currently working 61 outstanding cases.
- The most prolific suspects in gang crime are in order of cases: Latino, African-American and Asian gangs.

UNSOLVED GANG RELATED CRIMES THAT POLICE NEED THE PUBLIC'S HELP IN SOLVING:

(complete descriptions of each crime are at the end of the Fact sheet)

The following three unsolved gang related crimes are three of 61 current outstanding cases that the police need the public's help to solve. One is still unsolved after more than three years. The others happened this year. All are examples that gang activity and gang-related crime takes place all over the City of San Diego.

- Murder of 32-year-old Sharen Burton and 45-year-old Carol Waites on January 1, 2003. Killed by a spray of bullet in a liquor store parking lot when they stopped after church to buy a fireplace log.
- Murder of 16-year-old Gilberto Regalado on January 15, 2006. Killed while standing in an apartment complex parking lot during a party.
- Murder of 18-year-old Thanh Nguyen on July 7, 2006. Killed while driving his car to return some rental movies in Mira Mesa.

“Invariably, just about every time one of these cases breaks open, we can point to a tip from someone in the community who either saw something or heard someone talking about one of the incidents in question.”

-- Mayor Jerry Sanders

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY TO POLICE

- If you see suspicious activity, call the police at (619) 531-2000.
- If it is a crime in progress, call 911.
- Anyone with information is encouraged to call Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-TIPS (8477) where you can remain anonymous. You could be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,000).

GANG-RELATED UNSOLVED CRIMES:

Murder of 32-year-old Sharen Burton and 45-year-old Carol Waites on January 1, 2003.

- Burton and Waites, along with two children, ages 7 and 2, were returning from a midnight church service just before 1 a.m. on New Year's Eve. They pulled into the parking lot of Dr. J's Liquor Store at 5080 Logan Avenue to buy a fireplace log. Dr. J's was the only store open in the neighborhood at that hour.
- Waites walked into the store, while Burton waited in the car with the two young children. Moments later, two vehicles pulled up in front of the store, and stopped at the curb. Several men in one of the vehicles then leaned out and sprayed the parking lot with gunfire.
- Burton, in the car, was killed. The 7-year-old boy was critically injured by gunfire when he shielded the 2-year-old with his own body. Waites ran out from the store, and was shot in the parking lot. She ran back in the store, collapsed and died.
- Two other people in the parking lot were injured by the gunfire, but survived.
- The suspects are believed to be members of a documented street gang. Despite public appeals for information, including a billboard ad profiling the case, the establishment of an 800 tip line, and the existence of a \$50,000 governor's reward, the case remains unsolved.

Murder of 16-year-old Gilberto Regalado on January 15, 2006

- Regalado was attending a party at 5265 Naranja Street in Lincoln Park. He was standing in the parking lot area of the apartment complex with a group of people, when a sports utility vehicle passed by, made a u-turn, and then parked.
- Several suspects got out of the car and walked into the lot and approached the group, including Regalado. The main suspect pointed a firearm at Regalado and shot him to death in front of the group.
- The suspects fled in the SUV. They are believed to be members of a documented tagbanger group.

Murder of 18-year-old Thanh Nguyen on July 7, 2006.

- Nguyen was driving west on Mira Mesa Boulevard approaching Camino Ruiz, on his way to return some movie rentals.

- The suspect drove up next to Nguyen and displayed a handgun. Nguyen sped up to try to get away, but the suspect vehicle followed him and shot at him. After Nguyen was shot, he crashed his car head-on into a vehicle driving in the opposite direction near 8300 Mira Mesa Boulevard.
- Police have very limited suspect information and evidence in the case. The case is believed to be gang related.